RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, 1st December, 2009/Agrahayana 10, 1931 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

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ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 161.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 162.

*161. *[The questioner(s) Shri Amar Singh and Shri Varinder Singh Bajwa were absent. For answer *vide* page 37 *infra*.]

Production of crude oil

*162. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that to increase the production of crude oil and natural gas, Government is planning for auction of the oil and gas exploration blocks under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the new exploration blocks include Assam and North East;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the awarding of such blocks to companies would have any effect on ecology of the area; and

(f) if so, the action plan for the maintenance of the ecological balance at these places?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JITIN PRASADA): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) In order to increase the exploration and production of oil and gas in the country, eighth bid round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-VIII) was launched on 9.4.2009. 70 blocks (24 deepwater blocks, 28 shallow water blocks, 18 onland blocks) were offered under NELP-VIII. Bids were opened on 12.10.2009. 76 bids have been received for 36 blocks.

(c) and (d) Following 4 exploration blocks were offered in the North-East region for bidding:

Block Name	Area (in sq. kms.)	State
AA-ONN-2009/1	2217	Manipur
AA-ONN-2009/2	1740	Manipur
AA-ONN-2009/3	84	Assam
AA-ONN-2009/4	84	Assam

(e) and (f) Production Sharing Contract (PSC) has the provisions for protection of environment and ecology in the area of operations. Article 14 of PSC relating to protection of environment provides for necessary safeguards for maintaining the ecology of the area while conducting operations is prevent any ecological/environmental damage. It also provides that Contractor shall conduct its petroleum operations with due regard to concerns with respect to protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, it has been said that the eighth bid round of the NELP has been completed. I would like to know what has been the result, because it is understood that the eighth bid round of the NELP has not met the expectations of the Ministry. On the other hand, it has been said that ONGC has found Uranium in the oil fields of Barholla, Amguri and Geleki and, therefore, private companies are very much interested in occupying those fields. I would like to have a specific reply on this issue from the hon. Minister.

SHRI JITIN PRASADA: Sir, as far as the eighth bid round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy is concerned, we went in for this bidding process at a time when there was a downturn and there was recession. There was contemplation within the Ministry whether to go in for this round or not. But we took the decision to go ahead and we came out with results that were much better than our expectations. Out of the 70 blocks that were on offer for bidding, there was a bid for 36 blocks. And out of the ten coal bed Methane blocks, eight blocks were on bid. So, we got a result of about 51 per cent in terms of the bids that came in for this round. In terms of monetary figures, the amount that has been estimated for the eighth round is 1.3 billion, as compared to the seventh round when it was about only 1.2 billion. In fact, this round of bidding has been successful in terms of the market conditions. No matter that compared to the seventh round, the number has slightly declined, but that is because of the market conditions.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, it is a matter of great concern that the Ministry is trying to withdraw from O.N.G.C. the Assam's assets and urban basin and handed it over to the private companies. It is a setback to the interests of the North East region as a whole. On 27th November, thousands of people sat on a dharna in front of the ONGC headquarters at Nazira on protest of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, put your question.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Again, this Ministry is trying to shift ONGC and OIL office from Assam to Kolkata. I would like to protest such a move. It is against the interests of the people of Assam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, be careful with the words you are using.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, I would like to have a specific reply in the matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, put your question.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, I seek protection on behalf of the people of Assam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the question?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): Sir, I don't know from where the hon. Member has got this information. There is no question and no reason to shift the OIL or ONGC office from Assam to Kolkata or anywhere else. There is no such proposal.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, my specific question...

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all. Your two supplementary questions are over.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, my specific question was that Assam's assets and...

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you had asked your specific question earlier, this time could have been saved. What is the specific question?

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, Assam's assets and Assam urban basin are on the verge of being shifted out of Assam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has already replied to that. Shri Bagrodia.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, exploration of any minerals from these blocks is a continuous process and it leads to the development of the country. The hon. Minister said that out of these 70 blocks 49 blocks have not been given the bid by people. When do you want another bid for them? Why are private people not interested in these blocks? I just want to know about the blocks. This is a continuous process and unless you go in for a bigger way, we will continue with the shortage of petroleum in the country. So, I would like to know your policy about exploration in the country.

SHRI JITIN PRASADA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as far as the bidding for the blocks is concerned, out of 70 blocks 36 blocks were bid for, and it is not, as the hon. Member said, that 49 weren't bid for. Only around 34 were not bid for. ..*(Interruptions)*.. So, more than 50 per cent were bid for. It is a world-wide phenomena that 100 per cent of the blocks are never bid for, especially when there were down-turn and recession in the market during the previous year across the world. I can give you figures of different countries that went in for bidding of blocks. When they went in for bidding, Algeria got 26 per cent bidding only, Uruguay got 18 per cent, Brazil got 41 per cent, Indonesia got 31 per cent, Norway got 52 per cent and Iceland got 40 per cent. That way we are far ahead of other countries and got better response. It is the endeavour of this Government to ensure oil security and we are trying to ensure that best technologies and best people come to India. We are framing simplified laws giving them incentives so that they can get tax benefits. If the procedure is simpler, people can come, bid, explore the depths of

Indian sedimentary basin and find out oil here so that we become oil sufficient and our country can strengthen itself as far as oil security is concerned.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, in the reply two expressions have been used — "New Exploration Licensing Policy 2009" and "production sharing contract". My question is: (a) Who owns the petroleum products of the country? (b) Does the Government have any standard production sharing contract? ..*(Interruptions)*.. (c) Is the contractor entitled only to contract price or also a share in the ownership of the product? Please clarify it.

SHRI JITIN PRASADA: Sir, as far as the New Exploration Licensing Policy which was started in 1999 is concerned, bidding of oil blocks and gas blocks under this policy from then onwards is subject to a profit-sharing contract. In that profit-sharing contract, a contractor is given the mandate to explore and find out whether there is any commercial viability with regard to oil or gas. Whatever expenses are incurred in finding out or searching oil, they are reimbursed. That is how there is a share of the Government and of the contractor with regard to the profit that comes which is known as the profit petroleum. That only comes when oil or gas is commercially viable.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, our State, Tripura, is floating over gas and there is a high potential to explore gas from here and there. But the thing is that ONGC is minimising its period of exploration so the seasonal workers who depend on this work get less than six months' work in a year. So, my request is to give more time for exploration. As there is potential it will to serve the seasonal workers in the right earnest.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Sir, I am very happy to inform the hon. Member that as per the request of the Government of Tripura, the ONGC has cleared power plant there. Though the cost of power transmission was very high, but in order to help the small State of Tripura, the ONGC has agreed to put up a small power plant which will be able to use their gas.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, I would only like to thank the hon. Minister for this.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: You intervened; that is why, it happened.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: No; no intervention...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sarkar, your question is over. Question No. 163.

पंजाब में राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना का कार्यान्वयन

*163. **श्री अवतार सिंह करीमपुरी**: क्या **ग्रामीण विकास मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना (नरेगा) के अंतर्गत पंजाब को अब तक आवंटित की गई धन-राशि का वर्ष-वार और जिला-वार ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ख) राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना के अंतर्गत राज्य में सृजित रोजगार के अवसरों की जिला-वार संख्या कितनी है;

(ग) राज्य में इस योजना में व्याप्त अनियमितताओं के संबंध में अब तक प्राप्त हुई शिकायतों का जिला-वार ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(घ) इस संबंध में अब तक लंबित शिकायतों का जिला-वार ब्यौरा क्या है?

ग्रामीण विकास मंत्री (श्री सी.पी. जोशी): (क) से (घ) एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।